



USAID
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Use of AVUE in USAID: Frequently Asked Questions

An Additional Help for ADS Chapter 418

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Use of AVUE in USAID: Frequently Asked Questions

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General Information

Q: What is AVUE?

A: Avue Digital Services (AVUE) is a state-of-the-art human resources web-based application, now used by USAID when filling most competitive service positions, that automates recruitment, assessment (rating and ranking), referral, and communications, and facilitates the selection process.

Q: How does AVUE work?

A: AVUE is a service delivery system that automates the federal hiring process. It takes the current Federal hiring process content and uses the power of the internet to build and post vacancies. Interested applicants can review vacancy announcements and answer position-specific questions on-line. The system also allows applicants to create, edit and archive electronic resumes; to check the status of jobs for which they have applied; and to withdraw from consideration for a job for which they have previously applied. After the vacancy announcement closes, the Office of Human Resources (M/HR) reviews the system's automatic rating and ranking of the candidates according to preestablished criteria. The best qualified candidates are identified and forwarded to selecting officials.

Q: Is the AVUE system secure?

A: Yes. Even though AVUE hosts the application, AVUE is run on a private secure database and USAID is the owner of the AVUE data. The system meets the Agency's security requirements.

Q: How can I find out about USAID vacancy announcements?

A: All USAID vacancies are listed under Careers on the external website and Careers on the HR website located at www.usaid.gov.

Q: Can I receive advance notification of USAID vacancy announcements?

A: Yes. M/HR issues USAID General Notices entitled “Merit Promotion: Open Announcement” listing the job or jobs open. The total listing of open positions is available on the M/HR website. Employees must follow the instructions given to apply. Also, AVUE allows all applicants to automatically retrieve e-mail notification if this option is chosen when the applicant establishes an account in the system.

Q: What types of positions will be filled using AVUE?

A: Most Civil Service, except for Senior Executive Service (SES) positions and Foreign Service New Entry Professional and International Development Intern positions, will be filled using AVUE.

Q: Is AVUE the only way to submit an application for USAID positions?

A: Applicants may apply online using AVUE or submit an Applicant Questionnaire Form (paper application). However, applicants are encouraged to submit applications online. If you complete and transmit an online application, AVUE will send an immediate e-mail response regarding the status of your application. Plus you can continue to check AVUE regarding the status of your application until the final decision or selection is made.

Q: What if I don't have a computer?

A: Most resource centers, unemployment offices, public libraries, college placement centers and job search agencies have computers and internet access for use by the public.

Q: What if I don't have e-mail?

A: There are several Internet Service Providers that offer free e-mail accounts, such as Hotmail, Lycos and Yahoo. You can access one of these providers to register for a free e-mail account.

Q: Exactly what does it mean to apply online?

A: You submit your application using the Internet through Netscape 4.7 or Internet Explorer 5.0 or higher. When you first access the system at the website, you must establish an account by answering a set of core federal questions. The system will assign you a user ID and password, which can be changed. The core federal questions will be stored in the system and will be used by the system as a part of the initial screening, e.g., for determining current status, veterans' preference, highest grade held, reinstatement eligibility, minority and disability status, e-mail and street address, phone number, and other relevant information.

Q: What if I need help applying online?

A: For assistance in applying for a vacancy, you may contact the Human Resources (HR) Specialist listed on the vacancy announcement. We suggest, though, that you not wait until the closing date to ask. If applying online poses a hardship to you, there is an e-mail link to the AVUE Help Desk by clicking on the “yellow e-mail envelope” in the bottom right hand corner of each screen in the Applicant intake. The e-mail response from the AVUE Help Desk to the applicant is very quick (within 24 hours). If it is a complicated situation and you have provided a telephone number, the response is by phone.

Q: Will USAID accept paper applications?

A: Yes. However, M/HR will assist applicants in any way possible to submit their applications online by the closing date of the vacancy announcement. Applicants who submit paper applications will be requested to respond to the same questions as applicants applying online. The application package must include a signed copy of the completed Applicant Questionnaire Form; a resume or OF-612, Optional Application for Federal Employment; narrative responses (typed on plain bond paper) to support your KSA competency selections; and any other required documents listed in the vacancy announcement. You may contact the HR Specialist listed on the vacancy announcement for additional information. This entire package must be submitted to the HR Specialist prior to the closing date of the vacancy announcement. M/HR will scan the data into the system on the applicant's behalf for the specific job for which the applicant is applying.

Q: What if someone submits false information?

A: AVUE is a Federal job application system. Providing false information, creating fake IDs, or failing to answer all questions truthfully and completely may be grounds for not hiring, for disbarment from Federal employment, or for dismissal after a person begins work. Falsifying a Federal job application, attempting to violate the privacy of others, or attempting to compromise the operation of this system may be punishable by fine or imprisonment (see [US Code, Title 18, section 1001](#)).

Q: When exactly do jobs close in AVUE?

A: Positions close at 11:59 PM Eastern Standard Time on the closing date of the vacancy announcement. At midnight, jobs that have closed will not be available for review or application.

Applicant/Employee Information

Q: As an applicant, can I access the system from home?

A: Yes. As an applicant, you can access the website from any location, whether at home or at work at <http://www.avuedigitalservices.com/usaaid/applicant.html>.

Q: Can I apply for jobs using my office computer?

A: Yes. USAID's policy permits employees to use their office computers and email to apply for jobs. However, you are reminded that you may use Government property/resources to apply for jobs only if it does not interfere with the performance of your regular duties. If you work for another Federal agency or in the private sector, contact your employer's Human Resources office for information on whether or not this is acceptable.

Q: This is the first time I have ever registered in AVUE and the system is telling me that someone already registered with my Social Security Number. How could this occur?

A: No one else is able to use your Social Security Number. If you started the registration process and did not complete it before logging out, your SSN was recorded and is in suspense mode. Login to AVUE as a registered user, select "Edit Personal Information" and press "Next." You can then complete the registration process.

Q: I am uncomfortable using my Social Security Number (SSN) to establish my account in the system. Is there any way I can apply for a position online without my SSN?

A: No. Your SSN is one of the few reliable means that Government agencies have of distinguishing one applicant from another. Many applicants have the same name, or may even have the same birth dates. The SSN is the identifier suggested for use by the Office of Personnel Management for Federal job applications, and is the only way we can definitively differentiate between applicants. If someone else attempts to open a new account with your SSN, the system administrator will be alerted that your SSN already exists with a specific User ID and Password and that a new account is trying to be established with the same SSN. The system meets the Agency's security requirements.

Q: I tried to login using my e-mail address and it doesn't work.

A: Try using the ID# that you established when you first registered in AVUE. If you don't remember it, you can use your e-mail address, but remember the system is case sensitive and you must use the same case you used when you originally typed it into AVUE. For example, if you originally typed your e-mail address using all capital letters, you must use all capitals when trying to login.

Q: I don't understand why AVUE won't let me in.

A: Please review the procedures for logging into AVUE. You must be a registered user before you can apply for USAID jobs. In addition, when asked for a password, choose one that is at least 5 characters long and type it twice, making sure you use the same case in both instances.

Q: After I have established an account, am I required to apply for a vacancy every time I go into the system?

A: No. Once you have established an account, the system uses the information to determine the vacancies for which you are eligible to apply. You may scroll through the vacancy, including the questions, but you are not required to transmit anything. You can merely exit the system or return to the main menu to select other vacancies to view.

Q: If the system only accepts online applications, how do I send other attachments, such as my college transcripts, SF-50's, etc.?

A: You may attach required documents indicated in the vacancy announcement to your online application from any saved file. However, documents such as SF-50's, DD-214, and college transcripts will only be requested by the HR Specialist from the candidate(s) selected.

Q: Can I create a resume online?

A: Yes. Once you have answered the core questions and established your user ID and password, you can then create your resume. Once created (into the system), you can go back in and update or change your resume.

Q: Can I submit my resume via e-mail?

A: No. A resume submitted via e-mail is not linked to the AVUE process. AVUE's Staffing Module is automated recruitment software which provides for intake, rating, ranking, and referral of applicants. In order to apply for positions in AVUE, you must log into the system and apply online or complete and submit a paper application that is scanned into the system for rating and ranking.

Q: I already have a resume prepared. Can I load it into the system?

A: Yes. AVUE enables you to upload a word document or cut and paste your resume into a specified text box that will accept up to 16,000 characters. The system currently allows only simple text, and does not accept special formatting, such as bold print and underlining.

Q: What if I want to submit a long version resume or additional documents?

A: Resumes should be brief. You should only include relevant work experience, with short descriptions and your education. If you rank among the top qualified candidates, and are scheduled for an interview, then you may wish to share additional documents with the selecting official.

Q: What happens if I don't submit a resume with my personal information when applying for a job?

A: You do not need to submit a resume if your online application provides enough information to verify your work history and KSA competency selections. However, a resume is required with submission of a paper application.

Q: How will the Office of Human Resources verify my experience, education, or responses to my questions?

A: AVUE does not diminish or abolish the HR Specialist's role in verifying qualifications of individuals. The Specialist audits the resumes of all applicants who are ranked best-qualified by the system for sufficiency of requirements. The HR specialist may request additional information from applicants to verify education, work experience or length of time in a position. Questionable situations or issues are addressed in the interview process, as well.

Q: What are knowledge, skills, and abilities (KSAs)?

A: **KSAs** are the attributes required to perform a job and are generally demonstrated through qualifying experience, education, or training. Knowledge is a body of information applied directly to the performance of a function. Skill is an observable competence to perform a learned psychomotor act. Ability is competence to perform an observable behavior or a behavior that results in an observable product.

Q: Where do I enter my responses to KSAs?

A: There is a section in the automated application entitled, "KSAs/Competencies." In this section you must select statements that are designed to measure your experience and training in relation to the requirements of the job. Typically this experience is in or related to the job to be filled. You are rated and referred based on your selections to the position-specific statements (KSA competencies) as supported by information in your resume. The KSA competencies used in AVUE are derived from questions defined by the selecting official or a Subject Matter Expert (SME) in consultation with a Human Resources Specialist.

Q: How is my application rated?

A: The responses you provide to the knowledge, skills and abilities (KSA competencies) questions are the basis for the numerical rating calculated by the system, in accordance with the weighting of questions as determined by the selecting official and HR Specialist. To keep the integrity in the rating and ranking process, it is important that you select the description that best represents your highest level of experience.

Q: How quickly will my application be rated?

A: Your application will be rated instantly by the system one minute after midnight, Eastern Time, on the closing date of the vacancy announcement. However, a subsequent review will be conducted by the HR Office of candidates ranked best qualified before their ratings are finalized and entered on the referral list provided to the selecting official.

Q: Since the AVUE system will rate me according to my self-assessment and responses to the KSA competencies, what prevents me from selecting those choices which give me the highest scores?

A: Nothing will prevent you from doing this. However, falsifying or answering questions to mislead the system's automated process is a deliberate act of providing false or misleading information on your application. Applicants are reminded that this is a Federal job application system. Providing false information, creating fake IDs or Social Security Numbers, or failing to answer all questions truthfully and completely may be grounds for not hiring you, for disbarment from Federal service, or for dismissal after being hired. Falsifying a Federal job application, attempting to violate the privacy of others, or attempting to compromise this system is punishable by fine or imprisonment (U.S. Code, Title 18, section 1001).

Q: Is there a cut-off score applied to applications?

A: No. There is no cut-off score in USAID. The selecting official will receive the names of the best-qualified applicants for the position to be filled.

Q: How are applicants referred to the selecting officials?

A: Best qualified status applicants are sent on-line to the selecting officials in alphabetical order on a referral list(s). Non-status (those who have never worked for the Federal Government) applicants are sent on-line, on a separate list, to the selecting official in rank order by applying the “rule of three” and veterans preference procedures. There may be a variety of lists referred; i.e., merit promotion, reassignment, change to lower grade, reinstatement eligibles, candidates with physical disabilities and non-status candidates.

Q: How many best qualified candidates are referred?

A: The selecting official will receive the names of all best-qualified applicants who applied under merit promotion procedures for the position to be filled. The referral list may contain the names of as few as three candidates or as many as twenty candidates.

Non-status candidates (individuals from the private sector seeking their first competitive position with the Federal Government) are subject to competitive examining to be eligible for referral. Competitive examining authority has been delegated to the Agency by the U.S. Office of Personnel Management under a process called “Delegated

Examining.” Unlike merit promotion, competitive examining has different requirements for referral. It requires the application of veteran preference, the rule of three or category rating referral process, passover and objection procedures, and full public notice. The “rule of three” means only three best qualified candidates can be referred at a time. The “category rating” process allows for referral of more candidates. Human Resources Specialists decide the method to be used to examine under this authority and referrals are made accordingly.

Q: If I am not selected for a position, who should I contact to find out why?

A: If you are found ineligible **or not selected** for a particular position, you will automatically receive an email **indicating this**. You may contact the HR Specialist listed on the vacancy announcement for further explanation.

Q: Is there any way I can see which positions I have applied for or find out the status of these vacancies?

A: In order to keep track of the vacancies for which you have applied, you should elect to receive an email confirmation of your application when you apply for jobs. Keep this as a record of your application and save it. You should also print out a copy of the vacancy announcement itself, or at a minimum, note the name, telephone number, and e-mail address of the HR Specialist listed as the contact person. If you have any questions about your application or the status of the vacancy, please contact the Specialist in charge of your vacancy. Be sure to tell the Specialist the vacancy announcement number and title of the position.

Q: How do you confidentially collect EEO data from applicants?

A: Applicants have the option to voluntarily and confidentially enter demographic information when initially registering in AVUE . To ensure the candidate's anonymity, the data is immediately encrypted and cannot be tied to a specific candidate. Once the vacancy announcement closes, a demographic report can be generated; however, neither the HR Staff nor selecting official is able to associate this data to an individual. The data is also encrypted within the query processing tool which is proprietary. As a result, AVUE will not release this information. An encrypted report is shared with the Office of Equal Opportunity to review the impact a selection has on equal opportunity and affirmative action goals and objectives.